

with all receiving the Bronze Star Medal from Captain Giannaris.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the extraordinary bravery and devotion to their country of the courageous men of OSS Greek Operations Goup II on the occasion of their receiving the Bronze Star Medal for Valor.

TYRIK JOHNSON

HON. TRAVIS W. CHILDERS

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Mr. CHILDERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of young Tyrik Johnson of Coldwater, Mississippi. At the tender age of four, Tyrik was taken from this earth in a tragic accident on September 26, 2008. Tyrik was a bright, fearless little boy and he will be missed by all who knew him in his short life. The loss of someone so young is a cruel tragedy and his community will be the lesser for his passing. Tyrik is survived by his loving mother, Adrienne Johnson, and his caring great-grandparents, Marshall and Jean Johnson, all of Coldwater, Mississippi. I ask my colleagues to join me in extending condolences to Tyrik's family and keeping all of his loved ones in our thoughts and prayers.

REMARKS IN HONOR OF CAPTAIN ROBERT VALLEJO II, TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the courage of a brave and dedicated hero of the state of Texas and of our Nation.

Captain Robert Vallejo II was a soldier in the Texas National Guard and a true American hero. Robert gave his life in the service of his country on September 18, 2008, when the helicopter he was co-piloting went down near Tallil, Iraq.

Assigned to 2nd Battalion, 149th Aviation, 36th Combat Aviation Brigade as a pilot, Captain Vallejo did his part during a time of war, a fact that speaks volumes about his character and patriotism.

Robert graduated from Brewer High School in 1998 and graduated from Texas Christian University as part of the Reserve Officer Training Corps in 2005. After graduation from college, he attended flight school at Fort Rucker, Alabama. Becoming a pilot fulfilled his long-time dream of flying. Becoming a military pilot fulfilled his desire to, as his mother put it, "be a part of history and leave his mark."

He served as a soldier for nine years and was on his first overseas tour when he died.

Shortly after Robert's death, his family learned that the baby his wife is expecting in January would be a boy. Captain Vallejo's son will be named Robert Cale Vallejo III and will learn of his father through his family and friends, who described Robert as a kind, outgoing, and intelligent man with a wonderful sense of humor.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Captain Vallejo's wife, sisters, parents, and all of his family and friends. His community and nation honor his memory and we are grateful for his faithful and distinguished service to America.

Captain Vallejo will not be forgotten. His memory lives on through his family and the legacy of selfless service that he so bravely imprinted on our hearts.

TRIBUTE TO HORTENSIA "GUERA" ABRIL

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, I stand here today to honor a loving mother, supportive wife, adoring grandmother and doting great-grandmother, Hortensia "Guera" Abril.

Born in Nuevo Leon, Monterey, Mexico, she eventually moved to Colton, California where she grew up to become a longstanding, influential member of the community. A fulfilled homemaker thanks to her care, compassion and love for her family, Guera also proudly belonged to Colton's San Salvador Catholic Church. In addition to supporting her husband, Ray "Sonny" Abril, who served on the Colton School Board for many years, she too played an active role in the community as a longtime PTA member, well-respected and loved by all.

In addition to being survived by her husband Sonny of 53 years, her memory will be carried on by her three sons, Nick, Michael (Stella) and Dominic; her three daughters, Melinda Medina (Mike), Becky Gonzales (Reuben) and Nellie Carners (Joe); and one brother, Norberto Gasca. Guera will be sorely missed by 19 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and many nieces, nephews and friends as well.

As a longtime friend of Ray's, I would like to express my greatest sympathies for his family's loss. She meant everything in the world to him and will truly be missed. Let us take a moment to remember this great woman and her admirable dedication to instilling positive change and leading an exemplarily life, one whose footsteps we all hope to follow. The thoughts and prayers of my wife Barbara, my family and I are with his family at this time.

God Bless Hortensia "Guera" Abril for love of country and mankind.

THE 2008 ANGELS IN ADOPTION

HON. NANCY E. BOYDA

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Madam Speaker, This year, I have the great pleasure of seeing one of the finest constituents of Second District of Kansas honored as an Angel in Adoption. This award was given by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, of which I am proud to be a member. The story of the Second District's Angel in Adoption, Michelle Reed, is a story of hard work, commitment, and humility. It is a story that I am proud to share today.

In addition to adopting two children from Kazakhstan, Michelle has become an advo-

cate for international adoption by facilitating support groups and by serving on the board of Two Hearts for Hope. Michelle is truly an Angel in Adoption.

Michelle's story begins in 2004 when a cousin and a friend announced that they were adopting children from Korea and China. To support her loved ones, she began looking into the process. As Michelle says, "My husband and I had not discussed adopting. We had two children. My son, Jonas, was just starting high school in the fall and our daughter, Libby, was in middle school. The pictures of the children available for adoption were endless on the Internet. I began to think that we could give a home—a family—to one of these children."

In March of 2004, the Reeds signed an agency contract to adopt their son Jess, who was 3 at the time, from Kazakhstan. They traveled to Kazakhstan in November 2004 and lived there for 6½ weeks. In May 2005, they signed a contract to return for a little girl that they met on their first trip who was also 3 years old. They left in October, 2005 and returned home in December with a new daughter, Jsera.

When Michelle returned from her adoption journey in Kazakhstan, she started working to help other families. "After our first adoption, we both became passionate about helping those that were thinking of adoption." She is now the moderator of three Internet groups that provide support for families that are in the process of adopting internationally or integration assistance for those that have already adopted. They try to facilitate heritage knowledge, for example, by teaching parents to cook their child's native foods. Michelle and her family also hosted an exchange student from Kazakhstan this year who taught them so much about their children's heritage.

Michelle is also a board member of the newly formed organization, Two Hearts for Hope, which raises donations to send supplies to orphanages in Kazakhstan. Most of the supplies she works so hard to find are those that many of us take for granted, like shoes and warm clothing. "The facilities aren't perfect—there are broken windows and sometimes there's no heat. Because it's just south of Siberia, the need for warm clothing is magnified."

When speaking about her visits to Kazakhstan she said, "Once you leave those other children behind, you are not allowed to forget them." The love, warmth, faith and passion for helping others that Michelle possesses shines through when you meet her. I am pleased to say that once you meet Michelle, you are not allowed to forget her or the joy she has brought to others.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Mr. POMEROY. Madam Speaker, on September 29, 2008, I missed rollcall vote No. 673. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner:

Rollcall No. 673 "nay."